

**Living In Resurrection Power
(Week 19 - Finale)
Ephesians 6:10-20; Matthew 6:5-15
"Praying In The Spirit (Part 2)"**

Introduction

"Pray at all times in The Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints." **Ephesians 6:18**

Last week, we began our discussion of how to pray in The Spirit, by taking an in-depth look at The LORD'S Prayer. The prayer that Christ gave us as a model can actually be divided into two sections. The first section has to do with praising and honoring God for Who He is:

"...Our Father in heaven, Your name be honored as holy. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." **Matthew 6:9b-10**

It is this portion of the prayer that reminds us that God is not only our Father, but our HOLY Father, and accordingly we must align our will with His in order to pray in The Spirit. When we recognize God's person, then we realize that His will is what matters, rather than our wants. He is not just my Father, He is OUR Father. Therefore, He will not grant a prayer request that benefits me, while hurting my brothers and sisters in Christ. And neither will He grant a prayer request that is contradictory to His holiness. Therefore, I must seek the perfect will of God when I pray, for it is His will that is best for all of us, and it is His purpose that will bring the uttermost joy to my life. When we align our will with God's will, the answers to our prayers will always be a resounding... Yes!

"Take delight in The LORD, and He will give you your hearts desires." **Psalms 37:4**

This brings us to the second portion of The LORD'S Prayer. While the first portion is dedicated to God's praise, the the second portion speaks of our Petitions. Once our will is aligned with God's and we fully comprehend Who He is, then we know exactly what we should ask for. The first section of the model prayer is dedicated to God's Paternity (Our Father), God's Purity (Holy is Your Name), and God's Purpose (Your Kingdom come, Your will be done). The second phase of the prayer that focuses upon our petitions can be divided into three sections as well. God's Provision, God's Pardon, and God's Protection. Upon careful consideration, the scope of these three petitions actually covers all of our needs, both physical, and spiritual. We not only need the basic necessities to survive (food, clothing, shelter, etc.), but we also need forgiveness, as well as, spiritual guidance and protection from the enemy (the armor of God).

Christ, in His model prayer for the believer, actually demonstrated for us everything that we need to enable us to pray in The Spirit. And it is essential that we utilize this model to "teach us to pray" (**Luke 11:1**). Let us then, take a closer look at just how we should make our petitions known to The Father; petitions for His Provision, Pardon, and Protection. Please allow me to explain further.

God's Provision

"Give us today our daily bread" **Matthew 6:11**

Christians have been set apart by God to be different. I recently read that many business men, especially in Asian countries, develop their company business models based not on current trends, but on trends that they predict will occur over the next fifty years. That is certainly taking the long view of things, I must say. The inherent problem with this kind of long range planning is that none of us actually knows if we will be alive tomorrow much less fifty years from now.

I have found that people spend entirely too much time worrying about things that will probably never happen. What if we all just took a deep breath and focused on what we need for today? I'm not advocating that we stop saving money for a "rainy day" or making no plans for the future. I am simply

saying that, as Believers, we are to trust God to provide what we need and lay aside the worry and dread of the unknown future. Jesus reminded us that today has enough problems of its own.

“Therefore, don’t worry about tomorrow, because tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” **Matthew 6:34**

God wants His children to be in a constant state of prayer. That means He wants you to ask Him for what you need each day, to develop an every day dependance upon His care and guidance. Jesus died so that you could have an intimate relationship with your heavenly Father. Now I don’t know about you, but when I think I’ve got everything mapped out perfectly in my life, when I believe the “plan” is solid, I pray a lot less. Can I get a witness? The problem with this sort of “logic” is simple; our best laid plans cannot guarantee the outcome!

“Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit.’ Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring —what your life will be! For you are like a vapor that appears for a little while, then vanishes. Instead you should say, ‘If The LORD wills, we will live and do this or that.’” **James 4:13-15**

None of us really have a clue what is on the docket for tomorrow! Therefore, Christ commands us to ask Our Father daily for what we need... for today. So much of the stress and anxiety that we put upon ourselves is the direct result of “first world problems”. You see, here in this country, we have become so used to being spoiled and having our way, many live in constant dread of losing it all. We, like the rich young ruler who came to Jesus (**Mark 10:17-31**), don’t mind the thought of following Christ. We just want to have an additional “safety net” just in case.

I remember what a Guatemalan pastor told our mission team, when we were serving in his country. He said, “The difference between American Christians and those of us here in Guatemala is that you believe in God, but here we **DEPEND** on Him.” Good point. If you have much, you think that you will never run out, but if you have very little, you understand perfectly what it means to pray, “Give us this day, our daily bread.” Having wealth doesn’t make you rich. Having Christ and knowing His promise of provision, now THAT is true wealth!

You see, when you pray according to the model prayer, you must first realize that it is The Holy God, Who has adopted you as His son or daughter. His will is the best thing that can happen, and He has promised that if you will only learn to fully depend on Him, that He will see to it that you have everything that you truly need. Or as The Son Himself would say:

“Therefore, I tell you: Don’t worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn’t life more than food and the body more than clothing? Consider the birds of the sky: They don’t sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren’t you worth more than they? Can any of you add one moment to his life span by worrying? And why do you worry about clothes? Observe how the wildflowers of the field grow: They don’t labor or spin thread. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these. If that’s how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won’t He do much more for you — you of little faith? So don’t worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ Or ‘What will we wear?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.”

Matthew 6:25-33

Now, I am going to share one of my favorite “life verses” with you! I believe that it demonstrates the perfect balance for when you are asking God to provide you with your “daily bread”. It is a prayer offered up by a wise man named Agur (pronounced aw-goor’), and it is found in **Proverbs 30:7-9**:

"Two things I ask of you; don't deny them to me before I die: Keep falsehood and deceitful words far from me. Give me neither poverty nor wealth; feed me with the food that I need. Otherwise, I might have too much and deny You, saying, 'Who is The LORD?' or I might have nothing and steal, profaning the name of my God."

I cannot think of anything that describes the meaning of "Daily Bread" any better than that!

God's Pardon

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." **Matthew 6:12**

The one thing that all of us need from The LORD is forgiveness. We are sinful by nature. And even when we have been saved and regenerated, we are still tempted by our flesh to sin. Some Believers will claim that their very nature has been so radically transformed that they are impervious to temptation and sin. They are mistaken to say the least:

"If we say 'We have no sin,' we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us."
1 John 1:8

This is a true statement indeed. And John goes on to tell us that if we will simply admit our shortcomings, our God loves to forgive.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
1 John 1:9

The simple truth of the matter is, we all need forgiveness. And Christ reminds us that our Heavenly Father will be as forgiving to us as we are to each other. Remember the first portion of the prayer? He is "Our Father", and He expects His children to love one another as He has loved us.

We must remember when we read the "model prayer" that it is given to believers, and therefore, the forgiveness that Christ is speaking of is not the "salvation kind". On the cross, the sins of the world were placed on Christ, and He suffered and died to pay for them. This was the "debt" of sin that was owed to the Father, and it was completely satisfied at Calvary. So when Christ speaks of our debts in the model prayer, He is not referring to salvation. For if He was, the prayer would be suggesting that we are saved because of our forgiveness of others. This is, as we know by reading scripture, not the case. We are saved and forgiven by grace through faith (**Ephesians 2:8**). So what kind of sin is The LORD speaking about in the model prayer? The sins committed by forgiven Christians, that's what.

You see, just as John reminds us, even though we have been born again by The Spirit, we still make mistakes do we not? And those mistakes are "debts" that we owe to a righteous and holy God. They are an affront to Him. And He tells us that if we will simply ask for His forgiveness for these debts, then He will gladly cancel them out! What an amazing act of grace and mercy! But remember, He also expects us to extend the same forgiveness to our brothers and sisters, as He has extended to us.

In the parable of the Unmerciful Servant (**Matthew 18:21-35**), Jesus shows us exactly how The Father feels about us, when He forgives us of our sin debt that we could never hope to repay, and we, in turn, refuse to forgive even the slightest infractions against us. He calls it "wickedness" (**Matthew 18:32**). Those who have been **forgiven** must, in turn, be **forgiving**. After all, how can we hold a grudge against someone else all the while knowing that we do not deserve the grace the we have been shown? So Christ reminds us that much as we need forgiveness, so do those around us. After all, God is OUR Father, and He will not answer a prayer that helps us at the expense of others. So be a forgiver. That is, if you do not wish to have your prayers go unanswered!

I cannot help but be reminded here of Jesus, when He washed the feet of His disciples at the LORD'S supper. When He came to Simon Peter, the poor fisherman was appalled and exclaimed,

"You will never wash my feet..." **John 13:8a**

To which the Savior replied,

"If I don't wash you, you have no part with Me."

John 13:8b

And of course, Peter being Peter, then asks for an entire bath! And Jesus then says something really profound.

"One who has bathed, doesn't need to wash anything except his feet, but he is completely clean."

John 13:10a

Now don't miss this, because it is really good stuff! What Jesus was telling His followers was simply this: If you have been saved and forgiven, then you are clean. But sometimes your feet will take you in places that you should not go (spiritually speaking). And as a result your feet need to be washed, (your sin needs to be forgiven). And Christ is always willing and able to provide that cleansing. He goes on to tell His disciples that they should **"wash one another's feet" (John 13:14)**. What does this mean? That we must forgive others their sins, just as He has forgiven ours! Now does the whole "foot washing" thing make a little more sense to you?

Now, I don't know about you, but my "feet" get pretty nasty sometimes. I am forever needing to have them washed, and truth be told, you are as well. So why don't we learn to be pleasing to God by serving one another in love, rather than pretending that "our own feet don't stink" once in a while! I want to be part of a body that loves me so much that they want to help me overcome my sins, rather than look down on me for them. How about you? I want to be just as forgiving as Our Father. Boy, do I have a ways to go.

God's Protection

"And do not bring us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Matthew 6:13

Now I am not going to spend as much time on this one as I did the other two. The simple reason being that this is just another way of praying; "LORD, help me to put on the armor of God." And we have covered this extensively in our study of *Ephesians*. *The Bible* is very clear that a Holy God never tempts us to sin (**James 1:13**), but He most certainly allows us to be tested. But even in the testing, He has promised that it will never be more than we can bear (**1 Corinthians 10:13**). When we focus upon God's will in our lives, when we align our will with His and trust Him for everything that we need, **then** we are praying in The Spirit, and that my friends will perfectly equip you to face the enemy. For we are clothed in Christ Jesus, and He is... The Armor of God. We pray in The Spirit that Christ will empower us to stand against temptation as we are wrapped in the belt of truth, living that truth as our breastplate of righteousness, with our feet shod with the peace of knowing that we are right with God, enabling us to stand and fight. We wield the shield of faith and strike against the enemy with the sword of God's Word, while guarding our minds with the helmet of salvation. And by so doing... we stand firm and are delivered from the evil one! Thank God for the truth found in the book of *Ephesians*. It tells me just who I am in Christ and reassures me that the same power that rose Jesus from the dead... LIVES IN ME!

And let all of God's children proclaim His... TRUTH!!!